REPORT

“Without Gag offers a balance on the protests in Venezuela in the month of January of the year 2019”

On 10 January 2019, Nicolás Maduro made an illegitimate and unconstitutional claim in relation to serving a second term of office. Since this date in Venezuela there have been a series of protests throughout the national territory. The most critical day so far has been 23 January, as there was a large demonstration throughout the country, which culminated in the swearing-in of Juan Guaidó as President in Charge of Venezuela. The purpose of this report is to offer a balance of the most important events that have developed. Regarding arbitrary detentions, between 21 and 26 January 2019 the Forum Venezuelan Criminal has recorded a record 791 arrests across the country. Almost half of the arrests have occurred in Caracas (171), Aragua (112) and Zulia (97). On the other hand, up until 30 January 2019, the press has registered 956 arbitrary detentions throughout the country. The worrying thing about the situation is the constant detention of minors, 77 cases have been recorded, of which 11 have occurred in Yaracuy state, where it has been reported that the judges are coerced to dictate measures of deprivation of liberty of these minors. Regarding deaths in protests, The Venezuelan Education Program Human Rights Action (PROVEA) has counted between 22 and 25 January 2019 a figure of 35 people killed in protests. The vast majority of those killed were in the Venezuelan capital, as well as in the Bolivar and Portuguese states. It is also imperative to note that 33 of the dead are men, and 21 of these deaths occurred in a context of peaceful protest, while 14 occurred in a climate of violent protest. Likewise, media outlets have reported up to 30 January an increase in the deceased to 43. This is the same figure as during all the protests of 2014, which demonstrates the brutal escalation in repression. In addition to the above, there have also been several cases of torture in the various detention centers, to which they have transferred the protesters, subjecting them to various cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment. Military officials who objected to following orders have been brutally tortured. There have been about 380 cases of abuse, and 31 cases of cruel torture. Also, freedom of expression has been violated. Signs of this was the threat received by the Unión Radio circuit (who were forbidden to mention Juan Guaidó on the air as President in Charge of the Republic), the detention of journalists who were covering the demonstrations (including two journalists of French nationality) and the suspension of broadcasting César Miguel Rondón's radio program for issuing comments with political content. Without Gag, in the context of its work to promote and protect human rights, urges and demands the Venezuelan state to stop this wave of violence and repression inflicted by the security forces throughout the country. In addition, Without Gag requests that all punishable acts are investigated and duly punished.